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# Indian Battles

in the Inland Empire  
in 1858



COMPILED BY

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Historian Esther Reed Chapter  
Daughters of the American Revolution

Spokane, Washington  
June, 1914

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# Indian Battles in The Inland Empire in 1858

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"Daughters of patriot sires,  
Your hands will paint  
Upon the Unfolding Scroll of Time  
The worth of Home and Country."

At the annual meeting of the Esther Reed Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in Spokane, Washington, on June 7th, 1902, the Chapter historian made a report in which she said: "The city of Spokane and surroundings is historic ground, rich in incidents that should not be allowed to escape the pen of some historian. We are within forty miles of the spot where Captain Taylor, Lieutenant Gaston and five soldiers of the U. S. A. fell in May, 1858, in the first serious conflict in Eastern Washington between the Indians and the troops of our government.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Among the peasants of a Scottish highland there is a legend that if one stands beneath the colorings of a rainbow looking forward, they will see their past; looking backward, they will see their future. The bow of promise resting with one of its extremities upon the past and the other upon the future of the Chapter, cannot fail to leave upon the pages of its history truth and beauty, with all the colorings given them by the loyalty which fills the heart of every Daughter. May the Daughters of the American Revolution, standing beneath the American flag—that emblem of hope wherever its glory shines—in looking forward see the past made glorious by the heroism of their ancestors and in looking backward behold rising generations with transmitted loyalty."

At this date the Chapter numbered 29 members.

At the sixth annual assembly, D. A. R., June 4th, 1907, held in Spokane, a paper upon the Steptoe Expedition, written by Mrs. T. R. Tannatt, was read.

The state regent announced it was the intention of the Esther Reed Chapter to erect a monument upon the battlefield near Rosalia.

As a preliminary to the erection of a monument, the Chapter, on May 17th, 1907, went to Rosalia and through the generosity of Rosalia people met by appointment the three survivors of the Step-

toe and Wright expeditions—Thomas J. Beall, Michael J. Kenny and J. J. Rohn.

In an effort to locate accurately the last stand of the conflict, the survivors were separately taken over the battlefield, the result being an undisputed statement as to the site.

Thos. J. Beall was Col. Steptoe's chief pack-master and depicted the exciting scenes most vividly, he said: "If it had not been for Timothy, the friendly Nez Perce chief, who acted as Steptoe's guide, I would not be here today, for the entire command would certainly have been annihilated."

Sergt. Kenny gave an honest, clear account of the whole event, which was deeply interesting.

Mr. Rohn related his part in the disinterring of the remains of the two officers.

Ralph Phelps obtained a photograph of the three veterans as they stood upon the sightly spot determined by them as the scene of final conflict.

The Chapter and people of Rosalia immediately took up the work of securing the land and funds for a monument. Three acres of land were purchased by the citizens of Rosalia and presented to the Esther Reed Chapter, D. A. R., the deed being held in perpetual trust for the Chapter by the commissioners of Whitman county.

The formal dedication of the battle-ground occurred on June 15th, 1908, with impressive ceremonies, the chief executive of the state, many men and women prominent in state and county, two hundred soldiers with their officers from Fort George Wright, and many D. A. R. officials and members uniting to render homage to the memory of those who bravely gave their all—their lives—when duty called.

The D. A. R. combined the Park dedication with the Old Settlers' Reunion in the following program:

Address of welcome at depot by Mayor F. M. Campbell.

March to the Memorial Park.

Music by Colfax Band.

Invocation, Rev. F. N. Smith.

Presentation of deed, M. H. West.

Response, Mrs. M. A. Phelps, State Regent, D. A. R.

Acceptance of deed, J. R. Ruply, chairman Whitman County Commissioners.

Address, General T. R. Tannatt.

Reminiscences of the Battle, Thomas J. Beall.

The Value of the Army as Pioneers, Col. Lea Feabiger, U. S. A.  
"Honor and Love to the Soldiers Give," Rosalia chorus.

Address, Judge S. J. Chadwick.

"Victoria, Victoria," Rosalia chorus.

Address, Governor A. E. Mead.

"Star Spangled Banner," Rosalia chorus, Colfax band.

In 1909 an effort to have introduced a bill in the state legislature appropriating funds for the monument was unsuccessful. Another effort was made in 1911 with like result.





Thomas J. Beall.      Michael J. Kenny.      J. J. Rohn.

The Chapter then resolved to raise the funds, if possible, unaided, and the unit system was adopted among the members. The financial depression of the country made progress slow.

Another effort was made in the legislature in 1913, when the bill passed the senate but did not reach the house. Revolutionary spirit rose among the Daughters who determined to unveil the monument in June, 1914, and the result was the accumulation of sufficient funds for the purpose.

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### THE STEPTOE EXPEDITION

"Great things have passed this way and we have learned them."

On May 8th, 1858, some Palouse Indians stole some stock belonging to the government from Fort Walla Walla, where Col. E. J. Steptoe was in command.

At this time complaints of disturbances, caused by Indians and suffered by miners en route to the Colville mines, were also brought to the notice of the same officer. Two miners from Thompson River, B. C., had fallen victims to savage ferocity.

Lieut. Kip, U. S. A., in his "Journal of the Expedition Against the Northern Indians," states:

"The Indians had received the report of John Mullan's party being on the way to survey and lay out a military road through their country and take possession of their lands. \* \* \* A confederacy was formed of all the most powerful tribes. \* \* \* Small parties of whites were cut off in every part of the country and even the safety of Fort Walla Walla was threatened."

Lieut. Mullan, U. S. A., was superintendent of the wagon road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton, Dakota, from 1858 to 1863.

These reports of disturbances determined Col. Steptoe to conduct an expedition into the Colville region to restore order; he also planned to investigate the recent theft of government stock.

The line of march led through what are now Columbia and Garfield counties.

The Snake river was reached, where a small band of Nez Perces resided, whose chief, Timothy, joined the command—a circumstance upon which depended the lives of all.

### Col. Steptoe's Official Report.

To Maj. W. W. Mackall,  
Asst. Adjutant General U. S. A.,  
San Francisco, Cal.

Fort Walla Walla, May 23, 1858.

Major: On the second instant I informed you of my intention to move northward with a part of my command. Accordingly on the 6th I left here with C, E, H, 1st dragoons and E Ninth infantry, in all five company officers and 152 enlisted men. Hearing the hostile Pelouses were near Al-pow-way, in the Nez Perce's land, I moved to that point and was ferried across Snake river by Timothy, a Nez Perce chief. The enemy fled to the north and I followed leisurely on the road to Colville.

On Sunday morning, the 16th, when near Te-hots-nim-me, in the Spokane country, we found ourselves suddenly in the presence of ten or twelve hundred Indians of various tribes, Spokanes, Pelouses, Coeur d'Alenes, Yakimas and some others, all armed, painted and defiant. I moved slowly on till just about to enter a ravine, that wound around the base of several hills, all crowned by excited savages. Perceiving that it was their purpose to attack us in this dangerous place, I turned aside and encamped, the whole wild, frenzied mass moving parallel to us, and by yells, taunts and menaces apparently trying to drive us to some initiatory act of violence. Toward night a number of chiefs rode up to talk with me and inquired what were our motives to this intrusion upon them. I answered that we were passing on to Colville and had no hostile intention toward the Spokanes, who had always been our friends, nor toward any other tribes who were friendly, that my chief aim in coming so far was to see the Indians and the white people at Colville, and, by friendly discussion with both, endeavor to strengthen their good feelings for each other. They expressed themselves satisfied, but would not consent to let me have canoes, without which it would be impossible to cross Spokane river. I concluded for this reason to retrace my steps at once and the next morning, the 17th, turned back toward the post. We had not marched three miles when the Indians, who had gathered on the hills adjoining the line of march, began an attack upon the rear guard and immediately the fight became general. We labored under the great disadvantage of having to defend the pack train while in motion, and in a rolling country particularly favorable to the Indian mode of warfare. We had only a small quantity of ammunition, but in their excitement the soldiers could not be restrained from firing it

in the wildest manner. They did, however, under the leading of their respective commanders, sustain well the reputation of the army for some hours, charging the enemy repeatedly with gallantry and success. The difficult and dangerous duty of flanking the column was assigned to Brevet Captain Taylor and Lieut. Gaston, to both of whom it proved fatal. The latter fell about twelve o'clock and the enemy, soon after, charging formally upon his company, it fell back in confusion and could not be rallied. About a half hour after this Capt. Taylor was brought in mortally wounded; upon which I immediately took possession of a convenient height and halted. The fight continued here with unabated activity; the Indians occupying neighboring hills and working themselves along to pick off our men. The wounded increased in number continually. Twice the enemy gave unmistakable evidence of a design to carry our position by assault and their number and desperate courage caused me to fear the most serious consequences to us, from such an attempt on their part. It was manifest the loss of their officers and comrades began to tell upon the spirit of the soldiers; that they were becoming discouraged and not to be relied upon with confidence. Some of them were recruits but recently joined.

Two of the companies had musketoons, which were utterly worthless in our present condition and what was most alarming only two or three rounds of cartridges remained to some of the men, and but few to any of them.

It was plain the enemy would give the troops no rest during the night, and they would be still further disqualified for further resistance on the morrow; while the number of the enemy would certainly be increased. I determined for these reasons to make a forced march to Snake river, about eighty-five miles distant, and secure the canoes in advance of the Indians, who had already threatened to do the same in regard to us.

After consulting with the officers, all of whom urged me to the step as the only means, in their opinion, of securing the safety of the command, I concluded to abandon everything that might impede our march. Accordingly we set out about ten o'clock at night in perfectly good order, leaving the disabled animals and such as were not in a condition to travel so far and fast, and with deep pain, I have to add, the two howitzers. The necessity of this last measure will give you as well as many words a conception of the strait to which we believed ourselves reduced. Not an officer doubted that we would be overwhelmed with the first rush of the enemy upon our position in the morning; to retreat further by day, with our wounded men and property, was out of the question; to retreat slowly by night equally so, as we would not then be in a position to fight all next day; it was therefore necessary to relieve ourselves of all incumbrance and to fly.

We had no horses able to carry the guns over eighty miles without resting, and if the enemy should attack us en route, as from their ferocity we certainly expected that they would, not a soldier would be spared for any other duty than skirmishing. \* \* \* Enclosed is a list of the killed and wounded. The enemy acknowledged a loss



of nine killed and forty to fifty wounded, many of them mortally. It is known to us that this is an under-estimate for one of the officers informs me that on a single spot where Lieutenants Gregg and Gaston met, in joint charge, twelve dead Indians were counted. Many others were seen to fall.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your obedient servant,

E. J. STEPTOE,  
Brev't Lieut. Colonel U. S. A.

Report of wounded and killed in the battle of Te-hots-nim-me.  
May 17th, 1858:

#### **Company C, First Dragoons**

Killed—Brevet Capt. O. H. P. Taylor, Private Alfred Barnes.  
Mortally wounded—Victor Charles De Moy.

#### **Company E, First Dragoons**

Killed—2nd Lieutenant William Gaston.  
Mortally wounded—1st Sergt. William C. Williams.

#### **Company H, First Dragoons**

Killed—Private Charles H. Hamish and James Crozet.

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#### **Recollections of a Soldier**

In an interview with John O'Neil, who participated in the Steptoe and Wright campaigns, published in the Spokesman-Review April 2nd, 1905, he said: "On Saturday evening the command went into camp. Early the next morning parties of Indians began to appear at camp and were allowed to pass freely among the soldiers. Steptoe decided not to proceed further that day. Indians began to increase in numbers and grew insolent. As the day wore on many engaged in taunting the soldiers, a few going so far as to fire their guns; some saying 'This is Sunday; tomorrow we fight.'

"Lieut. Gaston, a southern gentleman, had with him a young negro, who excited the curiosity of the Indians. Evidently they had never before seen a specimen of his race, and persisted in lavishing upon him such personal attentions as became annoying. They would examine the skin on his face and hands with discomforting minuteness, and would grab into his kinky locks and endeavor to straighten them out. Everyone was directed to avoid making any move that would precipitate a clash with the visitors, and the darky was, therefore, compelled to endure his popularity uncomplainingly, expressing his disgust in no stronger terms than: 'If you alls git dat 'ar wool you alls will have to fight for it.'

"The situation grew alarming to a high degree. \* \* \* As night came on, the Indians left camp.

"Before sunrise next morning, May 17, Col. Steptoe's command was marching southward. \* \* \* As Steptoe desired to avoid the appearance of having precipitated a warfare by this expedition, he

gave strict orders that the Indians' fire should not be returned until some one of the command was wounded. \* \* \* A squad of Indians decked in war regalia, dashed across the trail to the rear of the column and fired as they ran, but their distance was too great. They circled and recrossed the trail firing at closer range. These tactics were continued until Lieut. Gaston, who was covering the rear, sent a man to inform Steptoe that he was closely pressed. The man returned to report no change of orders.

"Gaston's horse fell under him and he mounted another, and still the column forged ahead in stubborn silence. A second horse fell under him and a ball tore across the back of his hand. Then the first volley was sent among the howling pursuers. Soon after that Gaston fell mortally wounded."

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### Evening at the Battle-ground

The white camp was surrounded by Indian sentinels who were guarding every avenue of escape, save one, which was a difficult pass and it was supposed by the Indians that soldiers did not know of it and could not travel it.

This was the only hope left the exhausted soldiers and this is wherein the Nez Perce chief Tam-mu-tsa (Timothy) and his two associates became the rescuers of the entire command.

The night was cheerless and dark and when all had become comparatively still, the entire force mounted and followed the chief in single file, as silently as possible, out through the unguarded pass.

Lieut. Gregg was in command of the rear guard. Sergt. Kenny had charge of six men in the extreme rear and was last to leave camp. From him and Thomas Beall we have learned the sad details.

Through the long dark night they followed the faithful chief upon whose fidelity their lives depended. The wounded, except those who could take care of themselves soon fell by the way, while the long line of fugitives passed over the plains and hills to Snake river and safety.

Twenty-four hours later they had ridden 70 miles and reached that stream about four miles down it from where the Indian guide lived, at the mouth of Alpowa creek. Going up the river to Timothy's village, that chief placed his own people out as guards and set the women of the tribe to ferrying the exhausted soldiers, and their effects across the stream. This was not completed until the night of the next day, and on the 20th of May, Steptoe's party met Captain Dent with supplies and reinforcements on the Pataha creek where the road, now leading from Dayton to Pomeroy, crosses it. Here the worn-out fugitives went into camp, for a time to rest and while there they were overtaken by Chief Lawyer of the Nez Percés, at the head of a formidable war party, himself bearing the Stars and Stripes, who wished the soldiers to go back with him and try it over again. The troops continued their way to Walla Walla, which was reached May 22nd. How this nation learned the rout of Steptoe so soon after it happened, was never explained, save

that the information—and they had many details of the affair—came to them through that wonderful system of communication by signaling, that served the purpose of telegraphy to the aborigines.

For more than fifty years Timothy repeatedly exhibited his devotion to the whites, dating from the time when Missionary Spaulding in the 30s Anglicized the name of the chief who had been known to the Indians as Tam-mu-tsa. In saving the lives of troops, and in the rescue of Eliza Spaulding, a daughter of the missionary, this convert showed that he valued his teachings.

Timothy's sympathies with the whites were not limited to services in their behalf; he aspired to common citizenship with them. He declined to go upon the reservation or take part with the other Nez Percés. He was naturalized and exercised the right of a citizen to take up a homestead of 160 acres, at his birthplace at the mouth of Alpowa creek.

How shall we rank brave Tam-mu-tsa—the noble hearted Presbyterian Indian, hero and preserver of the expedition?

He was more than soldier and just less than sage—

“And though the warrior's sun is set;  
Its light shall linger round us yet—bright, radiant, blest.”

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## COL. WRIGHT'S CAMPAIGN

“Other men have fought, bled and died, and we have entered into the fruits of their sacrifice.”

When the news of Col. Steptoe's defeat reached General Clark, commanding the department, he at once ordered the regular army force available on the Pacific coast to rendezvous at Walla Walla.

Col. George Wright was placed in command with instructions to suppress the Indians.

### Fort Taylor

In August, 1858, Fort Taylor was erected as a base of operations on the south side of Snake river.

On the 27th of that month, the entire force under Col. Wright crossed the river to enter upon a campaign against the northern Indians. At the close of Col. Wright's campaign Fort Taylor was abandoned.

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## BATTLE OF “FOUR-LAKES”

### Col. Wright's Report

Headquarters, Expedition against Northern Indians, Camp at Four Lakes, W. T. Lat. 47, 32° North. Long. 117, 39° West.

September 2d, 1858.

Sir: I have the honor to submit the following report of the battle of the “Four Lakes,” fought, and won, by the troops under my



command, on the 1st inst. Our enemies were the Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, and Pelouse Indians.

Early in the morning of the 1st, I observed the Indians collecting on the summit of a high hill, about two miles distant, and I immediately ordered the troops under arms, with a view of driving the enemy from his position, and making a reconnaissance of the country in advance.

At half-past 9 A. M. I marched from my camp with two squadrons of the 1st dragoons, commanded by Brevet Major W. N. Grier; four companies of the third artillery, armed with rifle muskets, commanded by Capt. E. D. Keyes; and the rifle battalion of two companies of the 9th infantry, commanded by Capt. F. T. Dent; also one mountain howitzer, under command of Lieut. J. L. White, 3rd artillery, and thirty friendly Nez Perces Indian allies, under command of Lieut. John Mullan, 2nd artillery. I left in camp all the equipage and supplies, strongly guarded by company "M," 3rd artillery, commanded by Lieuts. H. G. Gibson and G. B. Dandy, one mountain howitzer, manned, and, in addition, a guard of fifty-four men under Lieut. H. B. Lyon, the whole commanded by Captain J. A. Hardie, the field officer of the day.

I ordered Brevet Major Grier to advance to the north and east, around the base of the hill occupied by the Indians, with a view to intercepting the retreat when driven from the summit by the foot troops. I marched with the artillery and rifle battalion and Nez Perces to the right of the hill, in order to gain a position where the ascent was more easy, and also to push the Indians in the direction of the dragoons. Arriving within 600 yards of the Indians, I ordered Captain Keyes to advance a company of his battalion deployed and drive the Indians from the hill. This service was gallantly accomplished by Captain Ord and Lieutenant Morgan, with Company K, 3rd Artillery, in co-operation with the 2nd Squadron of dragoons under Lieutenant Davidson; the Indians were driven to the foot of the hill, and there rallied under cover of ravines, trees and bushes.

On reaching the crest of the hill I saw at once that the Indians were determined to measure their strength with us, showing no disposition to avoid a combat, and firmly maintaining their position at the base of the hill, keeping up a constant fire upon the two squadrons of dragoons, who were awaiting the arrival of the foot troops. In front of us lay a vast plain, with some 400 or 500 mounted warriors, rushing to and fro, wild with excitement, and apparently eager for the fray; to the right, at the foot of the hill, in the pine forest, the Indians were also seen in large numbers.

With all I have described, in plain view, a tyro in the art of war could not have hesitated a moment as to the plan of battle.

Captain Keyes, with two companies of his battalion, commanded by Lieutenants Ransom and Ihrie, with Lieutenant Howard, was ordered to deploy along the crest of the hill, in rear of the dragoons, and facing the plain.

The rifle battalion under Captain Dent, composed of two companies of the 9th infantry under Captain Winder and Lieutenant

Fleming, was ordered to move to the right and deploy in front of the pine forest; and the howitzer under Lieutenant White, supported by a company of artillery under Lieutenant Tyler, was advanced to a lower plateau, in order to gain a position where it could be fired with effect.

In five minutes the troops were deployed. I ordered the advance. Captain Keys moved steadily down the long slope, passed the dragoons, and opened a sharp, well-directed fire, which drove the Indians to the plains and pine forest. At the same time Captain Dent with the rifle battalion, Lieutenant White with the howitzer, and Lieutenant Tyler with his company, were hotly engaged with the Indians in the pine forest, constantly increasing by fugitives from the left.

Captain Keyes continued to advance, the Indians retiring slowly; Major Grier, with both squadrons, quietly leading his horses in the rear. At a signal they mount, they rush with lightning speed through the intervals of skirmishers, and charge the Indians on the plain, overwhelm them entirely, kill many, defeat and disperse them all and in five minutes not a hostile Indian was to be seen on the plain. While this scene was enacting, Dent, Winder and Fleming, with the rifle battalion, and Tyler and White with Company "A" and the howitzer, had pushed rapidly forward and driven the Indians out of the forest beyond view.

After the charge of dragoons, and pursuit for over a mile on the hills, they were halted, their horses being completely exhausted, and the foot troops again passed them about a thousand yards; but finding only a few Indians in front of us, on remote hill-tops, I would not pursue them with my tired soldiers, a couple of shots from the howitzer sent them out of sight. The battle was won. I sounded the recall, assembled the troops, and returned to our camp at 2 P. M.

It affords me the highest gratification to report that we did not lose a man either killed or wounded during the action, attributable, I doubt not, in a great measure, to the fact that our long range rifles can reach the enemy, where he cannot reach us. The enemy lost eighteen or twenty men killed and many wounded. I take great pleasure in commending to the Department the coolness and gallantry displayed by every officer and soldier engaged in this battle.

\* \* \* \* \*

Very respectfully, your obedient servt.,

G. WRIGHT,

Col. 9th Infy., Commanding.

Major W. W. Mackall, Asst. Adt. Gen., Head Quar. Dept. of the Pacific, Fort Vancouver, W. T.

## BATTLE BETWEEN FOUR LAKES AND SPOKANE FALLS

### II.

#### Official Report of Colonel Wright

Headquarters, Expedition Against Northern Indians, Camp on Spokane River, W. T., 1½ Miles Below the Falls.

September 6, 1858.

To Maj. W. Mackall, Assistant Adjt. General, U. S. Army.

Sir: I have the honor to submit the following report of the battle of the Spokane Indians, fought by the troops under my command on the 5th inst. Our enemies were the Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes, Pelouses and Pend d'Oreilles, numbering from five to seven hundred warriors.

Leaving my camp at the "Four Lakes" at 6½ A. M. on the 5th, our route lay along the margin of a lake for about three miles, and thence for two miles over a broken country thinly scattered with pines, when emerging on to the open prairie, the hostile Indians were discovered about three miles to our right and in advance, moving rapidly along the skirt of the woods and apparently with a view of intercepting our line of march before we should reach the timbers.

After halting and closing up our long pack train, I moved forward and soon found that the Indians were setting fire to the grass at various points in front and on my right flank. Capt. Keyes was now directed to advance three of his companies, deployed as skirmishers, to the front and right. This order was promptly obeyed and Captain Ord with Company K, Lieut. Gibson with Company M, and Lieut. Tyler with Company A, 3rd Artillery, were thrown forward. At the same time Capt. Hardie, Company G, 3rd Artillery, was deployed to the left, and the howitzer under Lieut. White, supported by Company E, 9th Infantry, were advanced to the line of skirmishers. The firing now became brisk on both sides, the Indians attacking us in front and on both flanks. The fires on the prairie nearly enveloped us, and were rapidly approaching our troops and the pack train. Not a moment was to be lost. I ordered the advance. The skirmishers, the howitzer, and the 1st squadron of dragoons under Major Grier, dashed gallantly through the roaring flames and the Indians were driven to seek shelter in the forest and rocks. As soon as a suitable position could be obtained, the howitzer under White opened fire with shell. The Indians were again routed from their cover, closely pursued by our skirmishers, and followed by Grier, with his squadron leading.

All this time our pack train was concentrated as much as possible, and guarded by Capt. Dent, 9th Infantry, with his Company B, Lieut. Davidson, 1st Dragoons, with his Company E, and Lieut. Ihrie, 3rd Artillery, with his Company B, advancing. The trail bore off to the right, which threw Ord and Tyler with their skirmishers to the left. A heavy body of Indians had concentrated on our left, when our whole line moved quickly forward and the firing became general throughout the front, occupied by Ord, Hardie and Tyler, and the howitzer under White, supported by Winder with



Gregg's troop of dragoons following in rear, waiting for a favorable opportunity to make a dash. At the same time, Gibson, with Company M, 3rd Artillery, drove the Indians on the right front; an open plain here intervening, Major Grier passed the skirmishers with his own and Lieut. Pender's troops, and charged the Indians, killing two and wounding three.

Our whole line and train advanced steadily, driving the Indians over rocks and through ravines.

Our point of direction having been changed to the right, Capt. Ord found himself alone with his company on the extreme left of the skirmishers and opposed by a large body of the enemy.

They were gallantly charged by Captain Ord and driven successfully from the high table rocks, where they had taken refuge. Captain Ord pursued the Indians, until, approaching the train, he occupied the left flank.

Moving forward toward the Spokane river, the Indians still in front, Lieutenants Ihrle and Howard, with Company B, 3rd Artillery, were thrown out on the right flank and instantly cleared the way. And after a continuous fight for seven hours, over a distance of fourteen miles, we encamped on the banks of the Spokane river—the troops exhausted by a long and fatiguing march, twenty-five miles, without water and for two-thirds of the distance under fire.

The battle was won, two chiefs and two brothers of the Chief Garry killed, besides many of lesser note either killed or wounded. (Since the battle we learn that Kam-i-a-ken, war chief of the Yakimas, was nearly killed by a shell.) A kind Providence again protected us, although at many times the balls flew thick and fast through our ranks, yet we had but one man slightly wounded.

\* \* \* \* \*

The friendly Nez Perces were employed chiefly as spies and guides, as well as guards to the pack train. As usual they behaved well. \* \* \*

Respectfully, etc.,

G. WRIGHT,  
9th Inf'y, Com'g.

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### Lieut. Kip's Account

We quote from Lieut. Kip's journal:

September 5th: This day's battle ended the fighting, the savages, terror stricken, began to scatter and Col. Wright pushed on toward the Coeur d'Alene mission.

On the way Chief Garry came in to ask that peace might be granted the Spokanes and Colonel Wright replied to him: "I have met you in two battles, you have been badly whipped; you have had several chiefs and many warriors killed or wounded; I have not lost a man or animal. I have a large force, and you, Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes, Pelouzes and Pend d'Oreilles, may unite and I can defeat you as badly as before. I did not come into the country to ask you to make peace; I am here to fight. Now, when you are tired of war, and ask for peace, I will tell you what you must do.

You must come to me with your arms, with your women and children, and everything you have, and lay them at my feet. You must put your faith in me and trust to my mercy. If you do this, I will then tell you the terms upon which I give you peace. If you do not do this, war will be made upon you this year and the next and until your nation shall be exterminated."

On the 8th of September a large band of horses were captured from Til-ko-hitz, a chief of the Palouse tribe, and the next day 986 of them, including colts, were shot, by order of Col. Wright. This was the finishing stroke. To the Indians Col. Wright and his soldiers were a devastating scourge, and a comet appearing in the heavens, at this time lent its terrifying, nightly presence, to quench the last spark of resistance and patriotism among them; they were crushed indeed, when they saw the Great Spirit had sent his flaming sword to hang over them in the heavens.

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### Council

Reaching the mission, Col. Wright found the Indians so terror stricken that it was difficult to get them to come in.

They wanted peace but were afraid to come near the soldiers who had handled them so roughly. With the assistance of the priests this was finally accomplished and the interview that followed, we give as a sample of several others, held later with tribes that had been hostile. Said Vincent, chief of the Coeur d'Alenes: "I have committed a great crime. I am fully conscious of it and am deeply sorry for it. I and all my people are rejoiced that you are willing to forgive us. I have done."

Col. Wright (to the Indians): "As your chief has said, you have committed a great crime. It angered your Great Father and I have been sent to punish you. You attacked Col. Steptoe when he was passing peaceably through your country and you have killed some of his men. But you ask for peace and you shall have it on certain conditions.

"You see you fight against us hopelessly. I have a great many soldiers at Walla Walla and have a large body coming from Salt Lake City. What can you do against us? I can place my soldiers on your plains, by your fishing grounds, and in the mountains where you catch game and your helpless families cannot run away. You shall have peace on the following conditions. You must deliver to me, to take to the General, the men who struck the first blow in the affair with Col. Steptoe. You must deliver to me, to take to Walla Walla, one chief and four warriors, with their families. You must deliver all property taken in the affair with Col. Steptoe. You must allow all troops and other white men to pass unmolested through your country. You must not allow any hostile Indians to come into your country and not engage in any hostilities against any white man. I promise you, that if you will comply with all requirements, none of your people shall be harmed, but I will withdraw from your country and you shall have peace forever.

"I also require that the hatchet shall be buried between you and our friends, the Nez Perces."

The Nez Perces were called and the part referring to them was repeated to the Coeur d'Alenes in their presence.

Vincent replied: "I desire to hear what the Nez Perce heart is."

Hait-ze-mal-i-ken, the chief of the Nez Perces, stood forth and said: "You behold me before you, and I will lay my heart open to you. I desire there shall be peace between us. It shall be as the Colonel says. I will never wage war against any of the friends of the white man."

Vincent: "It does my heart good and makes all my people glad, to hear you speak so. I have desired peace between us. There shall never be war between our people, nor between us and the white man. The past is forgotten."

The propositions of the Colonel were then formally accepted, and having been signed by him and his officers, they were signed also by Vincent and the other chiefs and headmen. They then smoked the pipe of peace all around and the council broke up.

On the return of the expedition to Walla Walla, we learn from Lieut. Kipp's journal, that the morning General Wright's command was in camp ten miles from Col. Steptoe's battlefield, a small force was dispatched to the place to try and recover the remains of the gallant men who were killed in that action, that with proper ceremonies their comrades might commit them to earth, "paying to them the last honors which a soldier can have."

"The party consisted of three companies of dragoons—Major Grier's, Lieutenants Gregg and Pender's—together with Lieutenant White with the howitzer's mules to bring in the guns. Dr. Randolph who (as well as Lieut. Gregg) was in the battle, accompanied the command. Lieut. Howard was also with them, together with Lieut. Mullan and party. The latter was sent to determine the position of the battle ground, while his assistants were to make a map and sketches of the place. Some Spokanes and Coeur d'Alenes went as guides.

In the afternoon an express arrived from Lieut. Mullan, at Steptoe's battle ground, to inform Col. Wright that they "had been entirely successful in the object of their expedition."

At noon (Sept. 25th) the dragoons returned from their expedition to the battlefield.

They reached there at twelve o'clock the day before, and found the hills, which on the sad day were swarming with their excited foes, now as silent and deserted as a city of the dead. The whole battlefield presented a scene of desolation.

In the heat of the battle but few of the bodies could be recovered, but in the night before their retreat these few were the only ones which could receive a hasty burial. The rest had to be left on the field where they met their fate. The wolves and the birds of prey had held their festival and for nearly six months the sun and rain had bleached the whitened bones which were scattered around.

As Lieut. Gregg and Dr. Randolph rode over the field, they could point out to the other officers the scene of each event in that



day's hard fighting—where the battle began, where charge after charge was made to drive back the foes who so far outnumbered them, where Taylor and Gaston fell in the desperate attack at the head of their men, and where they were gathered at night for the brief consultation, worn out with the contest, yet seventy-five miles of country to be passed over before they could place the river between them and their exulting enemies.

The remains of the two officers were found and the scattered bones of the men gathered up, to be brought back. The two howitzers were found, also, where they had been buried. The Indians had not disturbed them, but contented themselves with carrying off the gun carriages, which they afterward burned.

One thing more remained to be done. Among the articles left on the ground was a pair of shafts belonging to one of the guns. These were taken and fashioned into a rude cross, which was set up in the midst of the battlefield, to remind all future travelers of the sad event of which this had been the scene. And then, after depositing around it all that could be gathered up from the relics scattered over the hillsides and wherever the fight was waged, they left the field in solemn silence.

Poor Gaston, my parting with him was at West Point, when full of life and spirits and bright anticipations of his future career. My last recollection of him, is in his gray cadet uniform. I never saw him after, until I thus stood by his remains today. He was every inch a soldier; and, when during the last year, ill health weighed him down, and he feared the approach of that feebleness which would withdraw him from his duties, his military spirit seemed to be the strongest impulse left. He often expressed the hope that he might die in battle, and thus it was that his wish was gratified. He had a soldier's death, and will have a soldier's burial and grave.

“The fresh turf, and not the feverish bed.”

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Fort Walla Walla, Oct. 7th.: Today we turn to more solemn duties. At ten o'clock took place the burial of Captain Taylor, Lieutenant Gaston, and the remains of the men which had been found on Colonel Steptoe's battle ground. It was from this post they had marched forth and here they were to be laid to their rest. They were of course buried with military honors, the ceremony being invested with all the pageantry which was possible to show respect to the memory of our gallant comrades. All the officers, thirty-nine in number, and the troops at the post, amounting to eight hundred (reinforcements having arrived since our departure) were present and took part in the ceremonies. The horses of the dead, draped in black, having on them the officers' swords and boots, were led behind the coffins. The remains were taken about half a mile from the post and there interred.

Three volleys were fired over them and we left them where day after day the notes of the bugle will be borne over their graves while

we cherish their memories as those who laid down their young lives on the battlefield for their country.

Later the remains of Capt. Taylor and Lieut. Gaston were removed to the cemetery at West Point, where they rest with honored dead. Inscribed on their tombstones is: "Killed in the Battle of Te-hots-nim-me."

Lieut. Kip concludes his account with: "That immense tract of splendid country over which we marched, is now open to the white man, and the time is not far distant when settlers will begin to occupy it and the farmer can discover that he can reap his harvest and the miner explore his ores, without danger from his former savage foes."

After the Battle of "Four Lakes" an Oregon paper published this statement: "No event has ever done so much to secure the safety of our settlers as this victory."

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### In Memoriam

The inscriptions on the monument erected are: "Sacred to the memory of the officers and soldiers of the United States Army who lost their lives on this field in desperate conflict with the Indians in the Battle of Te-hots-nim-me, May 17th, 1858."

"In memory of Chief Tam-mu-tsa (Timothy) and the Christian Nez Perce Indians—rescuers of the Steptoe expedition."

"Erected by the Esther Reed Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Spokane, Washington, June 14th, 1914."









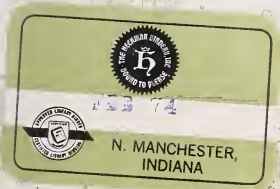
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